

The interior stone-work is from Cass. The whole building, we should say, stands on a bed of concrete twelve feet thick.

The libraries and committee-rooms will be generally lined with Riga wainscot, and have wood panelled ceilings.

The interior of the House of Lords, which we now approach specially, is entirely of Riga wainscot of the finest quality, richly and elaborately carved throughout. The throne and the other parts, which are now almost obscured by gilding, are also entirely of carved oak,—no composition ornaments being used in any part. The arms at the back of the throne are also of carved oak, gilded. The roof over the House of Peers, of wrought and cast-iron, as already mentioned, is of vast dimensions (perhaps 30 feet high from the ceiling to the ridge), and is divided into compartments for hot and cold air, with reference to the ventilation of the house.* The whole of the interior of the House of Lords, including the ceiling, is composed of the most elaborate joiners' work, by Mr. Grissell, and has been subsequently decorated and gilded, in the ablest manner, by Messrs. Crace and Son, of Wigmore-street.

Not long ago, we alluded briefly to the decorations of the House,—the elaborate carvings, the blaze of gilding; and our present engraving, with those which will follow, will give a further idea of their nature and effect. Nevertheless, a more detailed account of them will probably be acceptable to our readers.

The ceiling is divided into eighteen main compartments by massive moulded beams (projecting as much as 3 feet). Each of these are intersected by mouldings into four compartments, containing a centre, with four surrounding panels. The general ground of the ceiling is rich blue, bordered with red and gold, and blazoned with the royal badges of the United Kingdom, radiating from centres in which are the emblems of royalty, carved and gilt. The beams and mouldings are painted a deep gold colour, the enrichments and projections being all gilt, including the inscription, "*Dieu et mon droit*," variously repeated on the main beams.

Six traceried windows range on each side of the east and west walls; and three corresponding arched openings are formed at the north and south ends of the chamber. The piers between the windows are occupied by canopied niches, eighteen in all, intended for bronze statues of the principal barons who were instrumental in obtaining Magna Charta. Two models in plaster, one of Archbishop Langton and the other of Fitz-walter, bronzed and gilt to shew the effect, have been put up at the Throne end; and arrangements, as previously mentioned, are being made with artists for the whole series, to be cast in bronze.

From the ceiling to the sill of the windows the walls are of a brown stone colour. Around the jambs of the windows is painted the inscription, "*Vivat Regina*," many times repeated, intersected by roses on coloured grounds in quatrefoils. The niches, rather lighter in colour than the piers, are relieved with gilding and partly with colour, the backgrounds being painted a diapered pattern in chocolate brown and gold. Under the niches are gilt angels holding shields, blazoned with the arms of the barons intended to be placed above. The windows will be ultimately filled with stained glass, but only one on the west side is yet completed. This is the work of Mr. Hardman, of Birmingham, by whom

also the ornamental iron-work and brass-work have been executed. The remainder of the windows, too, will be confided to him. The endeavour of the architect was to obtain, with the character of the period, as much white light as possible. Success was not obtained till after many efforts.

The walls at the back of the arches will eventually be painted in fresco, to accord with one over the throne, already most successfully completed by Mr. Dyce, which appears in our engraving,—the subject, as most of our readers know, being the baptism of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of England. It has beneath it the following inscription:—

Fides Christiana in Angliam per S. Augustinum reducta.

J. de Witte Delinquent

Edilbertus Rex Cantus in Ecclesiam Dei baptizatus.

A. de Bontin Delinquent

Below the windows, on each side of the chamber, down to the gallery, the walls are lined with panelling, elaborately carved. The railing to this gallery is brass, of characteristic design and very highly finished, ornamented at the bosses with enamelled grounds of red and blue. Below the gallery the wall is also lined with panelling, containing most delicate carving, surmounted by an enriched frieze containing the carved inscription,—"*Fear God, Honour the Queen*,"—and intersected by slender shafts terminating in carved busts of the kings and princes. Springing from this panelling is a traceried cove forming the support to the gallery, and on the compartments of the cove are emblazoned on gilt grounds, the arms of the succession of sovereigns and their chancellors from the period of Edward the Third, when the peers first met as a separate House, to the present time, with the proper crests, helmets, and mantlings, and labels containing names and dates of appointments.

The wood carvings, generally, require special notice. A few years ago it would not have been possible to obtain such an amount of carving in England, of equal excellence, at any cost. By collecting a large number of the best examples of the 15th century (as many as two or three thousand) for the constant inspection of the operatives, they have been imbued with the true feeling pervading these works, and enabled satisfactorily to carry out the architect's wishes. The carvings were all first copied by Jordan's machine (a most important invention), and then finished by hand. Like the whole of the enrichments, it will be observed, they are all heraldic or symbolic. The drawings for the fittings and decorations, we must not omit to mention here, were made by Mr. Pugin, under the supervision of Mr. Barry. There is, perhaps, no one living so well qualified for such a task.

The throne, situated at the south end of the chamber, and raised on a dais of three steps, is shown in the engraving. Both in design and workmanship it is truly beautiful. But one almost regrets the amount of gilding upon it, which hides the fact that it is carved in solid oak. It is a canopy in three parts, 18 feet 6 inches wide. The centre, rising much above the sides, is for the chair of the Queen; and the back of this part are carved, gilt, and blazoned the royal arms, with the appropriate badges, emblems, &c. The ceiling is divided into small panels, on which are painted the red rose, with white rays on a gilt ground. On the upper part of this centre canopy are introduced figures, illus-

trating the orders of knighthood, in rich canopied niches surmounted by open tracery. The lower canopy, on the right of the throne, is for the chair of the Prince of Wales, and that on the left for the chair of the Prince Consort. On the back of these canopies are also blazoned the respective coats of arms, and appropriate heraldic distinctions.

The Queen's chair is of beautiful design and execution, carved and gilt, richly studded with enamels and crystals; the back and arms are covered with velvet, embroidered with the royal arms, &c. The two side chairs are in the same style, though of smaller dimensions. These chairs were manufactured by Webb, of Bond-street.*

The floor of the throne is covered with a velvet pile carpet of deep red ground, powdered with lions and roses, supplied, with the other furniture, by Crace.

Fronting the throne is the reporters' gallery, very commodiously placed and approached, and above that the gallery for strangers. The front of the former is richly ornamented with panelling, containing the royal badges painted on gilt grounds, surrounded by diaper ornaments. In the cove under this gallery are blazoned the arms of the different royal lines—the Saxon, the Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, and Brunswick, and on either side are illustrated the archiepiscopal and episcopal arms, interspersed with mitres, pastoral staffs, sceptres, &c.

The principal entrance is at this end of the House, from the Peers' Lobby, through a pair of brass gates 11 feet high and 6 feet wide, filled with open tracery work of beautiful workmanship, in a material not used in England for such a purpose for nearly 400 years. The shrive and gates in Henry VII.'s Chapel are amongst the best examples of such work remaining to us.

The floor of the chamber is covered with a carpet of a royal blue colour, dotted with gold. The seats for the peers, five rows on either side, accommodating 235 persons, are covered with red morocco leather, and the woolacks with red cloth.

The chamber is lighted by thirty-two branch lights, springing from the sides of the niches, burning gas on Faraday's ventilating principle, and by four splendid brass candelabra, two of them at the throne end, holding each twenty-five lights, and two at the bar end, holding each thirteen lights. Of these and other details we shall give illustrations hereafter, until which time we reserve a description of the Victoria Hall, at the south end of the House, and the Peers' Lobby, at the north end, both of which are fitted up in a style of corresponding magnificence.

We shall then also make some remarks on the works now in progress, the Royal Porch (an enormous construction), the Central Hall, and St. Stephen's Hall and porch, and supply deficiencies in our present notice.

If we have succeeded in conveying to our readers a commensurate idea of the elaborate and admirable manner in which the House of Lords has been completed, and of its gorgeous effect, their astonishment will be little less than their admiration when we tell them, that all this has been done in less than eighteen months.

Mr. Barry is raising an honourable trophy for his country, and an enduring monument for himself.

The following dimensions will be found useful. The length of the House of Lords is

* For description of the mode of ventilation adopted, see p. 168.

* A fuller description of these chairs will be found on page 180.